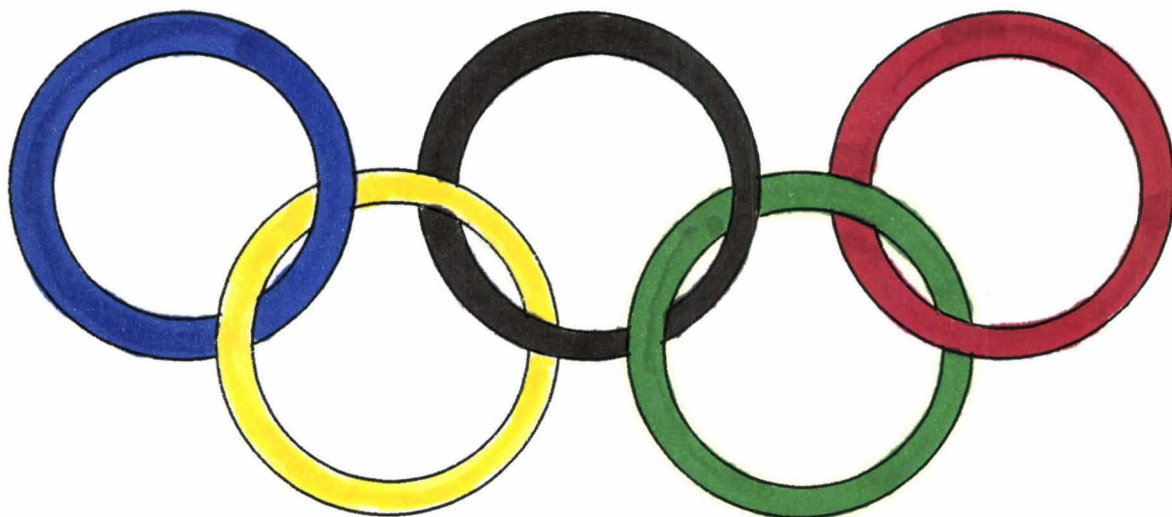


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The 1998 Winter Olympics:
How they may affect the Ashley National Forest
and
The Forest Service Role

Prepared by: Susan J. Wight

**THE 1998 WINTER OLYMPICS:
HOW THEY MAY AFFECT THE ASHLEY NATIONAL FOREST
and
THE FOREST SERVICE ROLE**

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Title: The 1998 Winter Olympics: How They May Affect the Ashley National Forest and the Forest Service Role

Abstract: Salt Lake City, Utah is the United States nomination for the 1998 Winter Olympics. The final Olympic selection will be made in 1991. The Ashley National Forest is within 100 miles of Salt Lake City. The potential impact the Ashley National Forest may experience will be explored and analyzed. Recommendations will be discussed as to how the Forest Service may market itself and gain greater visibility and presence with the public. Although this paper is focusing on an international sporting event, the application will apply to other activities (i.e., religious, youth group, cultural, etc.) that occur on a national, regional or local scale.

Keywords: Olympics, marketing, Utah, National Forests

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper looks at how the 1998 Olympics may impact Utah National Forests if Salt Lake City is selected as the host city. Data from past Olympics is reviewed as well as how other major events impacted neighboring National Forests.

As a result, this author has concluded that the Olympics provide a golden opportunity for the Forest Service to receive some international, prime time press coverage. Many people will be seeking information for future vacation trips. Except for the Wasatch-Cache National Forest, the Olympics will generally not significantly impact the Utah National Forests; however, long term impacts may be increased significantly if we are able to portray a positive image.

On a smaller scale, the Forest Service has many other opportunities to market themselves in Utah. Salt Lake City hosts a variety of national and regional events including conferences, trade shows, cultural and religious seminars, workshops and sporting activities. The Forest Service should be taking advantage of these opportunities not only as a practice arena for the Olympics, but also in terms of increasing its presence within the State of Utah, discovering the public's expectations, and determining what methods are most effective in promoting National Forest System Lands.



I. INTRODUCTION

A. Objectives

While this project paper is being written for the Ashley National Forest Management Team, other Utah National Forests may benefit from the discussions. This paper is being prepared to provide the manager with enough basic information to make preliminary decisions concerning Forest participation in the Olympics. The preliminary decisions include whether or not to participate in the Olympics and to what degree. To assist the manager in making that evaluation, this paper will review past histories of similar events and their impact levels. This report is only Phase I of the overall scope of the Olympic effort. It will inform the manager of what to expect if status quo is maintained. If the preliminary decisions include 'NO FOREST PARTICIPATION' or 'STATUS QUO IN TERMS OF MARKETING IS SATISFACTORY', obviously there is no need for a Phase II report. Though this paper does not thoroughly define Phase II, it does provide ideas to consider if active Olympic participation is desired. Phase II begins when the International Olympic Committee makes the final selection for the 1998 site and decisions are made concerning specific event sites.

Hence, this paper was designed to meet the following objectives for Phase I:

1. Look at past histories of similar events and determine the impact level the Ashley National Forest may expect from the Olympics; then have the Forest decide if this is an acceptable level. If it is not, develop methods for increasing or decreasing the impacts.
2. Have the Forest start making decisions for the Olympics now so that we are well prepared in 1998.

If Salt Lake City is selected as the 1998 Host City then Phase II may go into effect. Phase II will provide direction and implementation. This paper will briefly discuss some Phase II activities such as:

1. Methods for Utah National Forests to enhance their visibility at the Olympics.
2. Applying the techniques discussed in this paper to other national, regional, and local events to assist the Forest in better marketing.

B. The Olympic Prestige

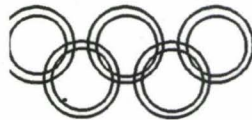
Being selected as the host city, state, and nation is considered a great honor. As a result, the Olympic host receives much public and media attention. The Olympics provide an unique opportunity for building a positive image on a international scale. Benefits may include heightening the world's awareness of the area's travel potential, as well as highlighting the business investment opportunities (Pyo, 1988). Olympic contenders are vying for economic and financial returns, new facilities that will

remain after the games are over, increased levels of tourism before, during, and after the Games, and national and international recognition (Ritchie 1984).

Salt Lake City, Utah is the United States' nomination for the 1998 Winter Olympics. Salt Lake City had bid for previous Olympics and were unsuccessful. This time the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) favored Utah for "it's commitment to winter sports, it's large population base, close proximity of venues, existing infrastructure, and track record of hosting successful major events." (SLC Winter Games Organizing Committee). The bid package submitted to the USOC stated that, "All of the facilities needed to host the Winter Games in Salt Lake City already exist or will be complete by the end of 1992. All venues are located within 45 minutes of the city's airport, city center and athlete's village." Furthermore, "Some of the world's most spectacular scenery is within a few hour's drive of SLC, including 5 national parks, 2 national recreation areas, 6 national monuments, 8 national forests, 48 state parks and 13 designated wilderness areas."

Utah is no stranger to the tourism and recreation industry. According to the Salt Lake City Olympic Committee (SLCOC), "The tourism and recreation industry is the largest private sector industry in the state. Nearly 11 million people visited the state in 1986. These visitors spent approximately \$2 billion while here. More than 48,000 Utahns are employed by the state's tourism industry."

The next step within the Olympic process is to make the final selection for the 1998 Winter Olympic site. The International Olympic Committee will meet in Birmingham, England in June, 1991 to choose the host city. This will allow the selected site seven years to gear up for a major event. If Salt Lake City is selected, the Forest Service has an opportunity to play an active role.



II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

Essentially, I did a literature research focusing on Olympic sized events. From there I contacted academic leaders in analyzing the impacts from tourist-type events. I had several conversations with SLCOC members to obtain their perspective. Finally, I talked with Forest Service employees who have dealt with similar situations including world's fairs and a world ski cup championship.

Amazingly, few studies have been done on the impacts of the Olympics. "In 1981, a comprehensive computer search of literature published on international events, impacts of tourism, olympics and economic impacts was undertaken. Over 10,000 indexes of journals and bibliographies were searched. Only 6 articles were found related to the subject at hand." (Armstrong, 1985)

In phone conversations with the researchers, many of them were fascinated with the idea of a ripple effect the Olympics may have on the surrounding communities, but were not aware that anyone had completed research in this area. What little research had been completed dealt with the predicted and realized social and economic impacts. No one knew what kind of impacts, if any, may result on

an economy based 100 miles away. The Appendix contains a map illustrating where the Ashley National Forest is in relation to Salt Lake City.

The attention was then focused on obtaining hard facts such as numbers of people and places of their origin. The 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles was attended by 400,000 people. (Pyo, 1988) Another 2 1/2 billion watched on television. (Jeong, 1988). As a result, Los Angeles was minimally impacted by the Olympics as 70% of the visitors were Los Angeles basin residents. (Emetaz, 1985)

At the 1988 Calgary Games it was estimated that 78% of the visitors would come from Canada, with another 15% coming from the United States. Athletes, trainers, coaches, volunteers, and others directly involved with the Olympics would account for 14,500 people. (Ritchie, 1984) At the Mexico City Games in 1968, it was determined that the average tourist's stay was 6 days. (Pyo, 1988).

Because it seemed apparent that the Olympics do not attract a large tourist base, I decided to find out why. Armstrong asserts that one of the most effective visitor attractions is an art and cultural project. Exhibitions and conferences follow closely; sporting events place far behind. (Armstrong, 1985).

In discussions with Forest Service officials, I was impressed with the initiative that the Wasatch-Cache National Forest has taken. They have taken a progressive stance having two employees who are participating on Olympic committees in official capacities. In addition, the Regional Office (RO) has acknowledged that the Olympics may warrant some special attention. Currently, the decision has been made to fill a GS-12 Winter Sports Specialist position in the RO with some focus being placed on the Olympics.



III. ANALYSIS

A. Current Plans and Expectations

The SLCOC chose very carefully where the various events would be located. Many of the Olympic activities will be held in Salt Lake City proper. The ski events will be held at Park City and Snowbasin ski areas. In particular, Snowbasin is slated to hold the Downhill and Super-G ski events. Snowbasin is located on National Forest System Lands.

Ski buffs will readily recognize that some of Utah's other well-known ski resorts, including Alta, Snowbird, Solitude, and Brighton, are not scheduled for any Olympic events. This was a conscious decision made between the Forest Service and SLCOC for environmental and safety reasons since these areas are all accessed by Cottonwood Canyon. Cottonwood Canyon is narrow, receives heavy recreation pressure, and provides no alternative access routes in case of an emergency. The decision was made not to have Cottonwood Canyon directly involved with the Olympics; but these areas do expect to experience increased use due to their close proximity. Their marketing strategies will

include being the training areas for the athletes as well as inviting the public to come and get away from the Olympic crowds and pressures.

In April 1985, the SLC Winter Olympic Committee prepared a Utah Winter Games Feasibility/Impact Study. That document states that the Olympic hoopla will last approximately 4 weeks. Pre-Games training starts 2 weeks before the Games, and the actual Games will last 14 days.

The Olympic Committee is predicting that 346,000 people will attend the events. Approximately 157,000 people will come to Utah in this time period, representing approximately 1 million visits.

It is anticipated that the 20% of the visitors will come from foreign countries; 70% will come from Utah and the remaining 10% will come from the rest of the United States.

B. Potential Impacts

In a telephone conversation with Park City's Director of Public Affairs, who is actively involved with the 1998 Olympics, I asked him what types of impacts the National Forests may experience from the Olympics. He hotly replied that he expects National Forest Lands to experience no impacts and he wondered why the Forest Service was even worried about it! Sadly, while this individual has confirmed that Utah National Forests have no visibility, he fails to recognize that one of the Olympic venues, Snowbasin Ski Area, is located on National Forest System Lands.

Roland V. Emetaz analyzed international events and their impacts on public lands for his Clemson report. The following were his findings:

Los Angeles, California - 1984 Summer Olympics - The Angeles National Forest was not impacted by the Games, as 70% of the Olympic spectators were from the Los Angeles basin area.

New Orleans, Louisiana - 1984 Worlds Fair - The National Forest in Mississippi realized only minor increases in visitor use as a result of this event.

Knoxville, Tennessee - 1982 Worlds Fair - Overall the Cherokee National Forest received minor increases in visitor use. However, at the beginning of the Fair, the Cherokee National Forest received tremendous increase in visitor use as the public believed other overnight accommodations were not available and therefore occupied National Forest Campgrounds.

The Great Smokey Mountains National Park received some increased visitor use during the life of the 1982 World's Fair. Mail volume increased by 63%. Interestingly enough, the Great Smokey Mountains National Park steadily increased recreation visits in the years immediately following the Fair. Within two years the National Park experienced a 400,000 increase from 8.1 million to 8.5 million visits. Officials attribute part of this increase to new customers becoming aware of the Smokey Mountains during the Fair.

Emetaz's report focused on how Expo 1986 may affect the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument. Information requests increased as visitor use maintained the status quo. More use was realized in the years after the Expo.

Except for the Wasatch-Cache National Forest, the reader may conclude that if everything is to remain the same the Utah National Forests will not realize any increased impacts during the life of the

Olympics. Increased requests for information may result in significant visitor use in the years immediately following the Olympics.

C. Public Wants/Customer Satisfaction.

During the 1988 Summer Games in Seoul, Korea, an intensive study was done on visitor preferences (Pyo, 1988). Should Utah National Forests decide that they want to be directly impacted by the 1998 Olympics, they may want to pursue these Korean findings:

1. There are two kinds of Olympic tourists. Those who are primarily interested in the host country and its culture, and those who are the pure sport enthusiasts. In terms of economic gain realized by the host country, the sports enthusiasts were less likely to spend money than were the typical tourists.
2. Over 46% of the people polled desired package tours. Specifically in Korea, the survey respondents indicated that 61% wanted to visit beaches, 56.4% national parks, and 51.2% mountains. Nature tours were ranked high, as were those focusing on cultural and historical interests.
3. When asked what they would like to see improved, people indicated they wanted more opportunities for leisure activities such as swimming and bicycling. Suggestions also included having childrens' activities, distributing information more efficiently, and providing facilities for the disabled.
4. In terms of Olympic souvenirs, pins were the visitor preference, closely followed by stamps, gold coins, badges and emblems. Functional souvenirs such as clothing, pencil cases, and caps, were desired more than decorative items.

For the Moscow Games, the USSR quickly realized that 87% of the foreign tourists who planned on attending the Games had never been to the Soviet Union. Seeing the country was as important, if not more important, than attending the Games. As a result Intourist was developed with the objective of developing foreign tourism in connection with the Olympic Games. It contracted with travel agencies in 78 countries, which in turn sold over 1.3 million admission tickets to visitors from 71 countries. Intourist published a free newsletter in the USA which served a dual purpose: imparting information on package tours planned for Americans, and gathering data for a survey on length of stay, preferred Olympic events, and popular cities for Americans to visit in the USSR.

D. Marketing Studies

1. Utah

a. State

In 1988, the Utah Tourism Study was completed (Sargent, 1988). Within its findings, it was noted that many people nationwide could not name any attraction in Utah. Among those who could, outdoor recreational opportunities, as well as winter sports, ranked highest as reasons to visit the Beehive State.

Utah is predominantly a vacation destination. Generally speaking, Utah visitors are older, retired, married, have higher incomes and are highly educated. Salt

Lake City is the primary destination, with the southwest corner of Color Country running second. Visitors are more influenced by their friends recommendations than by a variety of advertising techniques.

Outside of the state, tourists predominantly come from California, Colorado, Wyoming, Nevada, New Mexico, Montana, Idaho and Arizona. The majority of foreign visitors come from Canada, Germany, and the United Kingdom. States that provide the most competition in taking tourists away from visiting Utah are Colorado, Arizona and Nevada.

In terms of strategies, the Utah Travel Council has hired a marketing firm whose goal is to increase Utah's tourism five fold in 1995. Extensive media campaigns are being targeted in California, Arizona, and Colorado.

b. National Forests

In 1988, as a part of his Clemson project, Gordon Williams prepared a report on marketing strategies for Utah National Forests. Some of the Williams findings illustrate that the State has the perception that the Forest Service does not contribute to recreation and tourism opportunities in Utah. In reality, the Utah National Forests provide twice as many recreation visitor days as the National Park Service in the state. The Utah Travel Council attributed this disparity between perception and reality to the fact the National Forests have no image as the National Park Service does. To improve on this situation, it was Williams recommendation to emphasize "marketing the agency" and not the programs such as Woodsy Owl and Smokey Bear.

2. Olympics

At the 1988 Seoul Olympics, one of Korea's objectives was to prolong the length of stay of the visitor. To accomplish this, Koreans developed a variety of tour packages (Jeong, 1988). Korea analyzed visitors' preferences in terms of destinations opportunities and purchasing behaviors. The strategy included preparing efficient tourist packages, providing these to the appropriate markets, and doing so in a timely manner so that tour operators had adequate time to promote options (Pyo, 1988).

Both at the 1988 Winter Calgary Games and the 1984 Summer Los Angeles Games, the majority of the spectators at the events were from the immediate area. Promoters encouraged the media to provide coverage of the area attractions. Because of the high visibility of the events, both Calgary and Los Angeles were able to promote themselves internationally at a minimal cost to the world as year-round vacation destinations (Rooney, 1988).

For the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games, the Japan Tourist Bureau arranged a variety of low-cost itineraries which included touring historic sites, industrial factories, high schools and private homes (Pyo, 1988).

Finally, a Mexican Olympic Information Office was opened in New York for the 1968 Mexico Games.

3. World Cup Championship - White River National Forest

In 1989, the White River National Forest was a sponsor for the World Alpine Ski Championships held at Vail and Beaver Creek Resorts. The White River National Forest began planning for the event in June 1988. A Steering Committee was organized which decided to tackle this effort through the Incident Team organization. The team was primarily composed of public affair officers and recreation managers from forests throughout the nation.

The team's efforts included having signs that welcomed the visitor to the White River National Forest and flags/banners that clearly identified the White River National Forest. They developed the theme "Ski America's Mountain". A Forest Service press desk was established at the press center so that reporters had regular access to Forest personnel. As a result, 90 reporters and broadcasters seized the opportunity to schedule time with a Forest Service representative. The Forest Service realized \$38,500 worth of broadcast time, and 3,776,000 household impressions were made through the media.

The White River National Forest developed a variety of programs specifically geared for the Ski Championships. Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl participated in ski school. There were several information centers staffed by 16 hosts. Forty-one Forest Service personnel wearing full uniforms acted as Ski Hosts with their objectives being to ski with the public while providing information about the Forest Service role and mission. The White River National Forest developed and distributed press kits outlining six story opportunities. As a result, the Italians took advantage of a story on range management, and the Austrians viewed elk management first hand.

Overall, the Forest Service was able to present a highly visible, positive image, and certainly provided a model for other National Forests to study.

In terms of cost, the White River National Forest estimated \$165,700 was spent. Approximately \$86,000 was donated by individuals or other Forest Service Regions while the remainder came directly from the White River National Forest and the Rocky Mountain Region. Twenty-five percent was spent on materials, supplies, and services and the remaining 75% on salary, travel, and per diem.

E. Recommendations

Clearly, Phase I indicates that the Olympics will not cause increased impacts on the National Forests if the status quo is maintained. Developing effective marketing strategies could alter that conclusion if the manager so desired. The State of Utah and the Forest Service have a unique opportunity for international focus should Salt Lake City be selected for the 1998 Winter Olympic Games. This may be done efficiently and tastefully, if adequate preparations are taken. The following suggestions may assist in enhancing the Forest Service image:

1. Develop a Forest Service theme. Salt Lake City has selected the theme "The World is Welcome Here". The Forest Service may want to modify the theme slightly for its own use: "America Plays Here", or, if the Forest Service wants to take advantage of its lack of image in Utah, "Discover Utah's Best Kept Secrets - Your National Forests".

2. Market the spectrum of recreational opportunities that the Forest Service has to offer. Visitors may want to escape the crowds and long lines of the Olympics and therefore may be wanting the isolation and solitude provided in a semi-primitive setting. The Forest Service may want to provide roaded natural and rural opportunities to those visitors looking for social experiences with easy access, convenience, comfort and safety. It is recommended that the Forest Service determine the visitor's expectations and provide those opportunities where possible.
3. Seriously consider having the Forest Service host/sponsor pre-game and post-game activities and events. Mini games or satellite events such as ski with the Forest Ranger could provide excellent public relations. The White River National Forest discovered that the foreign media was interested in the "wildness" of America's public land and the use of it's resources. The media wanted to see "real" cowboys and "real" rangers in action.
4. Determine if there is a significant foreign market. If so, how do we meet the foreign customers' needs? Do we need signs and/or brochures in a language other than English? Park City currently has many of their ski slope signs in Japanese. Identify Forest Service employees who are fluent in a foreign language and make them available during hosted events.
5. Anticipate a significant increase in requests for public information. Consider having a central location for mail and making sure that the address is well advertised. Develop a generic response which is efficient as well as friendly.
6. Establish Forest Service information booths at strategic locations. At the 1982 World's Fair, user-friendly terminals were used to provide a variety of National Park Service information. Information was provided in 4 languages on 336 National Parks (Emataz, 1986). Incorporate current Forest Service computerized systems such as TRIS (Trails Resource Information System) and ROG (Recreation Opportunity Guide).
7. At least one year prior to the Olympics, have Forest Service officials contact the Olympic marketers including the tour operators and magazines, i.e. *National Geographic*, informing them of what kind of opportunities are available to their clients.
8. Insure that there is adequate printed material on hand. Avoid dating the material by using the name of the commemorative event so that the brochure may be distributed many years after the activity has been held.
9. Seriously consider taking the White River National Forest's approach to hosting an international event.
10. Develop Forest Service objectives and roles well in advance. Continue working closely with the Olympic Committee, Travel Council and Chamber of Commerce. Develop an array of alternatives based on participation levels. Look at benefit/costs for each participation level and select one that best meets the agency's needs as well as the public's demand.

11. Encourage outlying cities to develop tourist packages specifically for events utilizing National Forest resources. Emphasis should be placed on leisure activities. Encourage interpretative associations to have an adequate supply of souvenir material on hand. The White River National Forest found that visitors were extremely interested in the Forest Service lapel pins.

12. Develop a Forest Service Olympic Committee to insure that Utah National Forests are represented and actively involved.

13. Use uniformed Forest Service employees as Olympic officials during the events.

The Forest Service needs to be cautioned in terms of not placing all of its eggs in the Olympic basket. Many people stay away because of overcrowded conditions (Armstrong, 1985). If the objective is to increase tourist expenditure within a region, "smaller, less costly events are often more effective at achieving the goal..." (Armstrong, 1985).

The recommendation is for the Forest Service to look at once-in-a-lifetime events as well as annual events to enhance its public image. It may be prudent to de-emphasize sporting events because cultural and religious events attract a larger population. The Appendix contains a list of potential Utah events which should be considered for marketing emphasis.



IV. Summary

The 1990's are providing the Forest Service with some unique opportunities to market itself and enhance its public image. The 1998 Olympics is only one vehicle that may be used to accomplish this mission; however, if the Forest Service maintains its status quo, the Utah National Forests will not realize any impacts or benefits. At best, Snowbasin *may* be recognized as being located on public lands. Though I am impressed that the Forest Service has taken some initial efforts, it needs to continue to strive towards excellence both with the Olympic Committee and on its own. Between now and 1998, there are many local events that the Forest Service should practice on, thus perfecting its image.

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APPENDIX

List of Recent Sporting Events Hosted by Salt Lake City

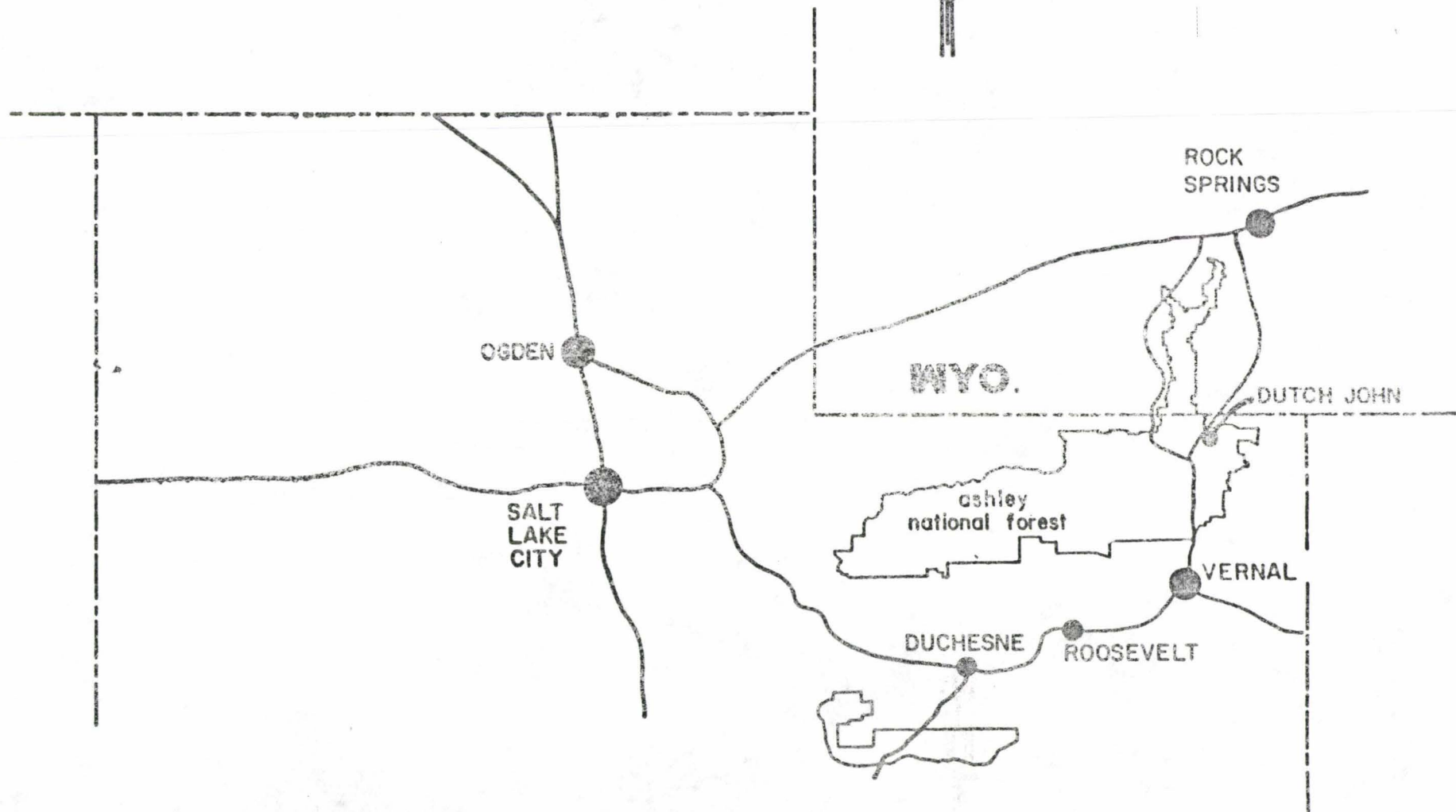
- 1988 US Olympic Gymnastic Trials
 US Telemark Championships
 US Open Volleyball Championships
- 1989 Men's and Women's World Cup Skiing
 Cross Country World Cup
 Gymnastic Friendship Tour
 US Cycling Championships
 NCAA Track and Field Championships
 US Indoor Archery Regional Championships
- 1990 Luge World Congress
 US Figure Skating Championships
 US Fencing Championships

List of Recent Non-Sporting Events Hosted by Salt Lake City

- 1988 Music Teachers National Association
 Future Business Leaders of America
 National Headstart Association
 Gina Bachauer International Piano Competition
 United States Conference of Mayors
 National Parent/Teachers Association
 American Contract Bridge League
 United Pentecostal Church International
 Future Homemakers of America
- 1989 National Young Farmers Education Institute
 Novell, Inc
 Coast to Coast
 Health Occupations Students of America
 American Association of School Librarians
 National Tour Association
 Council of State Governments
- 1990 Presbyterian Church USA
 Outdoor Writers Association of America
 Ecological Society of America
 Federation of Genealogical Societies
 North America Equipment Dealers Association
 Sweet Adelines
 Literacy Volunteers of America
 American Association for Adult and Continuing Education

Annual Events

Boat and Travel Shows
County and State Fairs
Festival of the American West in Logan, Utah
LDS Conference
Mormon Miracle Pageant in Manti, Utah
Shakespeare Festival in Cedar City, Utah
Utah Freedom Festival in Provo
Utah Golden Eagle Hockey Games
Utah Jazz Basketball Games



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